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WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Preparatory Committee
Second session
Geneva, 30 March-10 April 1992
Agenda item 12

ORGANIZATION OF FUTURE SESSIONS OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

Draft decision proposed by Australia

At its ..th meeting, on .. April 1992, the Preparatory Committee, at its second session, decided, without a vote:

(a) To take note with interest of the proposal on national action plans contained in the annex to its report;

(b) To request the Secretary-General to invite Governments, specialized agencies and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to give consideration to the proposal and to submit comments if they wished; and

(c) To consider the matter at its third session, with a view to adopting the proposal.

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Proposal: National Action Plans

Objective

To establish a specific World Conference activity which will provide, in a practical way, for improved observance of human rights standards.

Means of achievement

A written plan of action would be drawn up by each State and submitted to the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference. The action plans would become a document for the World Conference itself. Each State could, if it wished, give an initial progress report on the implementation of its plan at the World Conference. The process could be followed up thereafter within the framework of the Commission on Human Rights.

Features of the action plan approach

This approach would enable States to strengthen activities aimed at the promotion of human rights and to link the activities concretely with the World Conference process. It would be a specific, achievable activity which could be followed up after the Conference and which would enable the Conference to have lasting beneficial effects.

Each State would base its plan on its own situation and circumstances. Each State would set its own agenda, within a framework of shared commitment to the observance of human rights. Thus, the approach would be non-prescriptive.

The action plan approach would, moreover, apply to all, for every country can improve its observance of human rights.

Illustrative list of elements which could be included in national plans

A State could:

(a) Identify the United Nations or regional human rights instruments it intended to ratify and outline concrete steps by which it would achieve this;

(b) Indicate its intention to accede to the optional complaints mechanisms provided for in human rights instruments;

(c) Identify the human rights treaty reservations it intended to remove;

(d) Pledge itself to submit overdue reports to treaty bodies or to pay outstanding contributions;

(e) Develop targets in the area of economic, social and cultural rights and indicate what progress has been made towards achieving them;

(f) Describe legislation or administrative acts it has proposed or adopted which would advance human rights observance, for example by:

(i) Protecting the rights of minorities and other vulnerable groups;

(ii) Ensuring women's rights;

(iii) Strengthening democratic institutions;

(iv) Incorporating international human rights instruments in domestic law and practice;

(v) Lifting states of emergency;

(g) Describe the steps by which it would establish a national institution;

(h) Strengthen cooperation with regional and international human rights organizations;

(i) Propose a programme of human rights information and education, including in school curricula and the workplace;

(j) Undertake a programme of education and training for personnel directly responsible for the protection of human rights;

(k) Take steps aimed at strengthening the independence of the judiciary;

(l) Indicate the steps it would take to facilitate the activities of non-governmental organizations in the human rights field;

(m) Provide financial assistance to other States in the area of human rights;

(n) Work towards the strengthening of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights.